2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
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Fashoda, cattle byres and cattle

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with rather long legs, a slender body, and large horns. The horns, while young, are dressed into most manifold strange forms, this being the business of a particular craftsman, the "dresser of horns". Sometimes in a large herd one sees hardly any cattle with the horns in their natural shape. An illustration of how cattle are cherished and almost regarded as personal beings is the fact that they have about 40 different names for cattle, according to their colour, the configuration or size of the horns, etc. Vide page 107. — Domestic animals are not butchered, except when sick or exceedingly old. Oxen and goats are killed on festal occasions, such as funeral or marriage meals, or as sacrifices to Nyikang and Jwok. Neither do they sell cattle; for a stranger it is practically impossible to purchase a cow or an ox. The price of a cow is about £ 5; an ox is half the value of a cow which has calved; a young heifer has double the value of a cow. — Slaying a cow is done by stabbing it with a spear in the nape, so that the aorta is pierced. The blood is collected and cooked as food.

The cows are milked morning and evening, usually by boys, sometimes also by old men, but not by women, the latter having nothing to do with cattle. The quantity of milk obtained is but poor. A gourd is the usual milk vessel. These are washed with cow-urine, which gives the milk an unpleasant flavour. They also wash their hands in cow-urine; but they do not mix the milk with it, as is the custom with Dinkas and Nuers.

Each village possesses a common cow-shed, but into it the herd is put at night during the rainy season only, when the mosquitoes are very bad. The rest of the year they are kraaled in the open yard, where they are tied with ropes to short pegs driven into the ground. This cattle-court is a semi-circular enclosure; at the entrance to it there is a small circular place built of corn stalks and covered with ashes, in which the young men who watch the herd sleep. A fire of dried cow dung is kept smouldering all night in this place. Sick cattle are nursed in the cow-shed during the daytime, to keep them out of the sun and away from food, but not in the night, unless it is the season when all the cattle are housed. Many cattle die every year, from intestinal worms and other diseases. A considerable number of cows are barren.

The cattle are herded by young men and boys. As soon as the dew has dried off the grass, the herd is driven into the pasture. During the dry season, when grass is getting rare, the herds migrate into the lower and swampy parts of the country, where the grass is still flourishing; the Shilluks along the White Nile cross over to the east bank; likewise the cattle of the Sobat Shilluks descend to the lagoons south of the Sobat. So in both cases they have to cross the rivers, which is, on account of the many crocodiles living in them, not undangerous, and is therefore done with much care and accompanied by

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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enclosure surrounded by a reed fence which overlaps on the side facing the central space, leaving a narrow entrance about two feet long. This is so narrow that one has to turn sideways to get through it. The narrowness of this passage and the smallness of the doorway of each house are a means of defence against possible aggressors. No intruder could rush into the small compound and take those inside by surprise. As an additional protection the passage is blocked at night with thorn branches, which serve the purpose of a barbed-wire entanglement. 351

A chief or a nyireth may have three or four huts in his enclosure. The huts are made with walls of well-puddled cotton-soil mud about five feet in height, surmounted by a high conical thatched roof. The floor is often a little below ground level with a semi-circular step sometimes decorated with an inset pattern of mother-of-pearl, coloured glass, or fragments of pottery at the threshold. One of the two huts is used as the living and sleeping room, the other for cooking and the storing of the grain supply. The fence which encloses the homestead is about eight feet high and is constructed of millet stalks closely fastened together; it is set close to the walls of the houses. On the outside it is strengthened by cross-ties of stalks bound together, and the number of these cross-ties is regulated by strict custom: an ordinary Colo may have three or four, a chief or prince up to six, and only the fences around the king's enclosure have eight. 342 [565] [531] [343] 351 [565]

The largest building in the village is the communal cattle byre which is built like an ordinary hut, but about thirty feet in diameter. The high pitched roof, because of its great span, is very heavy and has to be supported by strong branches of trees based solidly on the floor and wedged tightly against the slope of the roof. In an open space near the byre thirty or forty stakes are driven into the ground, standing perhaps a foot above it; at first sight these might give one the impression that the villagers indulge in the simple pleasure of a game of quoits in the cool of the evening when the day's work is done, but they are for the much 343 [233]

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more practical purpose of tethering the cattle as towards sunset they come winding back from the pasture. In the hot months, if there is no danger from lions, they are left all night in the open and the byre is used as a dormitory by the boys and unmarried men of the village. It is the custom, too, for the unmarried girls to sleep together in vacant huts in the village, for the sleeping hut of a household is reserved for the householder and his wife and small children.

The rear part of the store hut is taken up by an enormous circular grain basket, four feet high and the same in diameter, standing clear of the floor on a wooden, three-legged stand and safe from the depredations of white ants. Whenever possible, cooking is done outside, but during the rains it is done over a fire of sticks or millet stalks burning in a hollow scooped out in the floor near the wall. A variety of pots clutters the floor space: the large earthenware water pot, an earthenware pot and a shallow iron dish for cooking, small beer pots, a number of drinking bowls made from the tough rinds of gourds neatly halved and dried in the sun. The roofing poles, resting on the mud walls and rising to an apex, form convenient places for tucking away household goods and personal treasures. Such an item one cannot fail to notice is that of several large heads of grain; these are stored for the next season's planting, and no matter how desperate the food situation may become, they will remain untouched, for the next year's supply of food depends on this stock of seed. Behind the poles also may be found a fragment of a mirror, a couple of cigarette tins holding a little oil or a handful of beads, a girl's blue dancing cloth or even the good wife's best Sunday frock, run up for her by the Sisters from some material brought from Kodok, probably some dreadful riot of green and red and yellow, hideous indeed to Western eyes, but to the proud owner more delightful than any Paris creation. Sometimes, to a visitor's distress, a line is slung across the hut on which hang dried fish or strips of meat. The high tone of these delicacies, the myriads of flies they attract and the thick, black smoke of the fire which, having no means of getting away, fills the hut, do not make

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the place very inviting, or, if one must enter, tempt one to linger. One is happy to conclude's one's business and escape to the comfort of the hut opposite.

This is the living and sleeping hut, and is usually much more clean and tidy than the other. The hard earth floor is neatly smoothed over with mud and carefully swept. Several cow hides hang on the walls or rest against them, and one of these is placed for the visitor to sit upon crosslegged, or a small platform made of light ambac wood may be brought forward for his accommodation. Lying against the wall is also the tall war shield of toughened hippopotamus hide belonging to the master of the house and his two spears, one his fighting spear, seven feet in length with a broad, smooth, highly polished, leaf-shaped blade on a straight, slender shaft of brown wood; the other his fishing spear, a foot shorter in length and with a long, narrow, triangular blade armed with ugly, serrated barbs. Inside the hut we may find several men; some sit in the neat way the Shilluk have with one foot tucked beneath them, a posture impossible for a stiff-jointed European, but one which they can maintain for long periods without the slightest discomfort. The host is dispensing beer to his guests from a large pot placed in the centre of the floor, and a generous bowl, holding about a quart, will be offered to you. This beer is made from fermented millet, and looks, and tastes, rather like cold cocoa. Courtesy demands that you take some, so you sip a little slowly, balance the bowl in your lap for a while, take another small drink and hand the bowl to your neighbour who finishes it off with avidity. You linger over a cigarette while the others pass round a pipe filled with rank, home-grown tobacco, or, if this is scarce, with charcoal. A Shilluk pipe has a large bowl made of clay, fire baked, fancifully carved and picked out in red and white and black; into this is fitted a wooden stem, two feet long and an inch in diameter, with a bulbous mouthpiece made from the stem of a gourd. With a complete disregard for hygiene a member of the party takes the pipe from the man next to him, puts it to his mouth, sucks vigorously for a few moments, his cheeks going in and out

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Sacrament he was receiving. He was not unmindful of my needs and sent word that food was to be prepared for me. I was taken into another house—a very special one into which few but the king and his queens enter. A woman brought me a skin to sit on and then, on her two knees, presented me with roasted maize cobs and native beer. I was in very great need of a drink for though we had waded through lots of water we could not drink it; if we did, dysentery was sure. This special house contained a very fine collection of animal skins and also the spear of Nyikang, a thing most sacred to the Shilluk. There also was a stick on which were recorded the years of the king's reign. I was sent a wing of a saddle-billed stork to use as a fan and these are, as a rule, reserved to the king himself.

At two in the afternoon I said good-bye to the king who made me a further present of a goat, and I set out for home. King Joseph, as he was now, had very thoughtfully ordered an ambach canoe to be brought so that I could cross a very deep swamp on a path that made our journey much shorter. I was feeling very tired, and every mile my feet felt like lumps of lead—the last mile seemed very long. But I arrived home about five o'clock and I announced in church the good news that the king was baptized and all the Catholics of the mission rejoiced. There were no hostile remarks from pagans that I ever heard of. King Joseph, formerly Papiti, died on September 22nd.

By King Papiti's express wish the customary temporary interment was not proceeded with, and on the night of the day following his death, he was taken to his own village of Pareth Papiti (Village of King Papiti) and there buried. The traditional funeral dances were held in his honour, but took place much earlier than usual, only about six weeks after his death.